

RollPlay



GM NOTEBOOK
ISSUE THIRTY-NINE

Hello Patrons!

It's all brand-new material this time around on the GM's Notebook, with prep for Court of Swords and Far Verona. Both are entering new arcs and as a result, I've had lots to prep for. On top of that, I've been working on making some additions to the Far Verona Faction Turn itself, so if you're a participant in that, make sure to take a look at section 6. Onward, to November and to plenty more RollPlay!

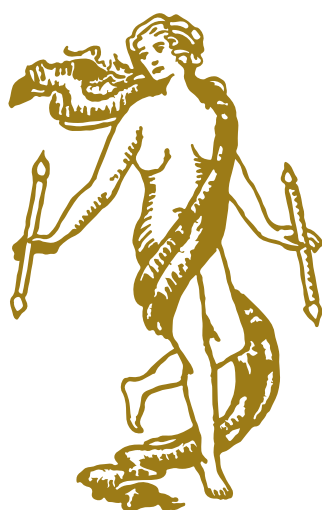
Thank you so much for your support, and welcome to Issue 39 of the GM's Notebook.

Adam Koebel
RollPlay GM



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Court of Swords:

Post-Vein Prep

The Guardian at the Gate

- a god who serves the Bureaucracy of Heaven
- a servant of Judgement, tasked with protecting the borders of The World from Vein incursions
- it's her job to protect the gate and block anything from coming back to The World that doesn't belong there

Ways Past:

- disperse the Guardian back to Heaven
- convince the Guardian that they belong in The World and are setting right a wrong that happened
- bribe, intimidate, cajole or otherwise manipulate the Guardian

If They Fight

- since she's a god, the Guardian will fight to the death
- she can summon other “celestial” creatures to help, but the ability doesn't always work and what she summons may or may not be all that helpful (trigger this ability halfway through her HP)

What Happens Next:

- the characters return to The World through the Fortress Gate
- they arrive in the Sun Temple chamber from whence they left, only a moment after they left, a heartbeat, really
- Grave Dirt is both curious and angry at what happened, uncertain if the characters are allies or not...
 - She serves the Necromancer King
 - He serves the Great Green Worm
 - Ramus???

Grave Dirt

Depending on how the PCs treat her, she could be a dangerous enemy or a useful ally, but she serves the Mara and by default hates Berg, is jealous of Ramus and will attempt to turn Unnamed, Maharib and Amira against Berg and Ramus.

- jealous of potential enemies
- loyal to the Necromancer King and the Mara
- overprotective of Little Sen

Stakes Questions:

- will the PCs ally with or oppose Grave Dirt
- how long before Grave Dirt attempts to kill Ramus
- will the Necromancer King make an appearance?
- what happens to UnNamed, Amira and Maharib in the real world?
- can UnNamed survive without a soul?
- what will their sickness look like, how will that manifest and what cost will they have to pay to stay alive?
- what will happen if UnNamed, Amira or Maharib dies?
- what do the False Tarot cards mean? what message was the Vein Oracle trying to send?
- will they stay in the Court of Swords and build a fortress out of the old Sun Temple, knowing they're inside the territory of the Necromancer King or will they go elsewhere?
- Will Amira abandon the group to better understand her Goliath heritage? Will Maharib go with her and if he does, will he survive the Axe's displeasure?
- Will the party investigate the mausoleum they saw at the entrance to the Vein?

Fronts:

TBD, but probably something to track the Alliance with Grave Dirt or her eventual betrayal of the PCs. Probably a track for dealing with the Bloody Scale Revenge Society (because anything that gets built here or anyone that seems like they're not on the side of the common people gets targeted). The Necromancer King's campaign against the Courts and the World at large.

Adventure Fronts

- Grave Dirt Friendship Tracker
- Sickness and Disintegration
- Bloody Scale Revenge Sabotage

Adventure Fronts

- Necromancer King vs. The World
- Heaven's Bureaucratic Failings
- The Slow Awakening of the Primordials

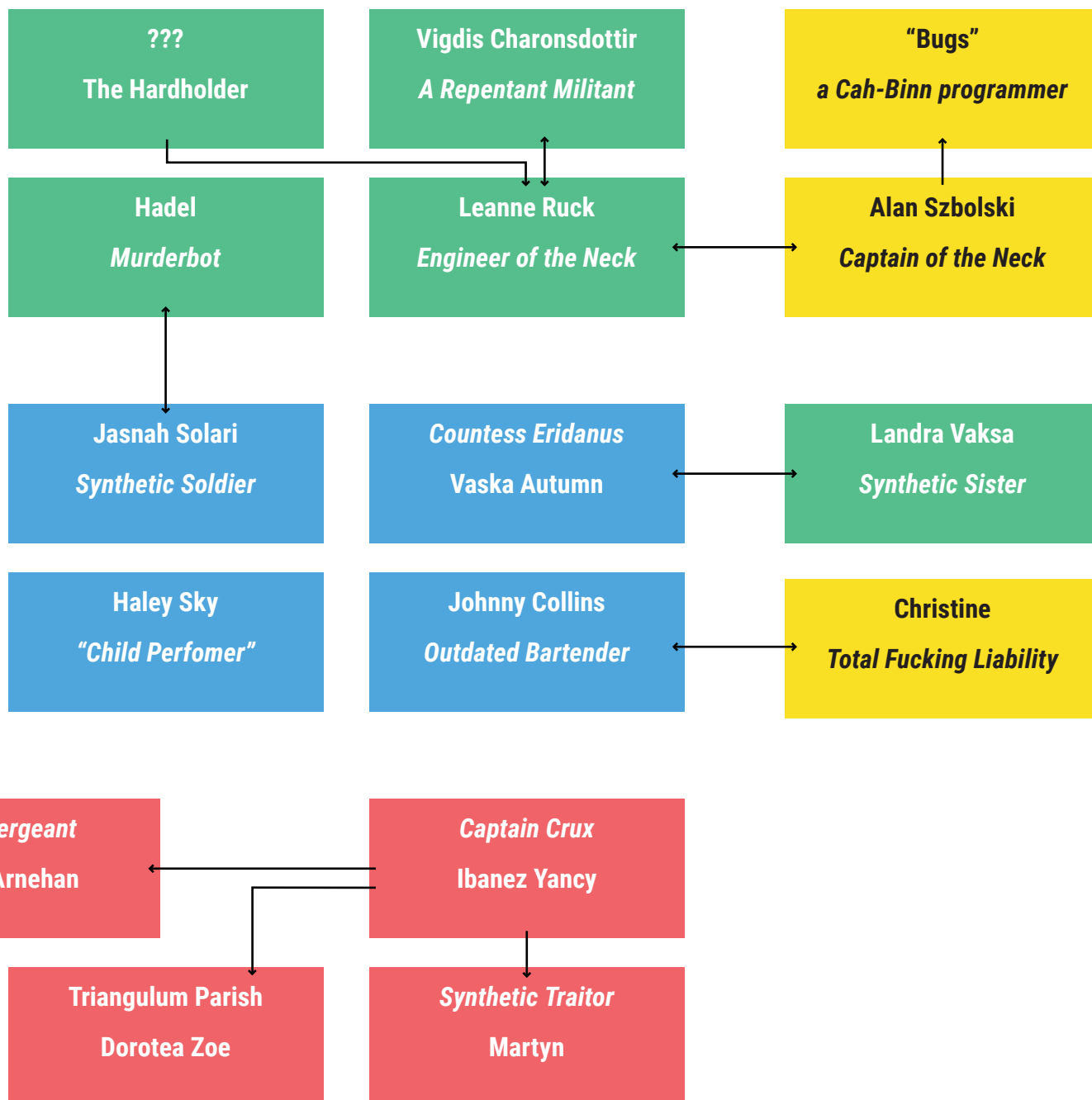
FAR

VEARONA

SEASON TWO

EPISODE SEVEN+

Airdate:	October 12th, 2019 @ 10am Pacific
Episode Length:	3 hours ("15 minutes" warmup, 5 minute break midroll) 2, 1 hour + 20 minute acts



EPISODE GOALS



Set up for the second arc, after introducing the characters and their primary antagonist, we need to establish the what of the game. Introduce important NPCs, etc. and give the players some agency to proceed.



PRIMARY GOALS:

Give the players a place to operate from, some potential allies and enough solid ground that they can go after Autumn's sister



SECONDARY GOALS:

Continue giving the players an opportunity to show off their motivation and set that motivation against the core goal of the party.

****A scene with the Captain apologizing that the trip is going to take longer than the standard 12 days (16 days instead), because the maps are "all fucked up" and he and Bugs need to chart a path.****

****A scene with the Engineer and someone in the party, talking about what's coming up - explaining the planet, the situation, etc.****

****One or two "in transit" vignettes between a PC and a PC or a PC-NPC-PC triangle - let the players dictate these****



VIGDIS CHARONDOTTIR

The PC's pick up a passenger on Navette, a former Repentant whose cell collapsed after being infiltrated by a Trilliant / High Church operative. This person is fleeing to Pilgrim's Gate to be reassigned.

- × open and friendly
- × self-sufficient and slow to trust
- × a "MIA, presumed dead" Deadbound

Wants: a break from all the bullshit, to return to the fold and to reflect on the future.



CABINA

- × breathable atmo, cold-to-temperate
- × an unusually safe place for people on the run from the Empire
- × religious culture, influenced by the Repentant faith
- × Cah-binn live here, or what's left of them
- × small planet, not densely populated
- × recovering from bombardment (think France, London post WWII)
- × several power groups, but SERAPH is the main conglomerate holding power here



PILGRIM'S GATE

- × a jumping-off point for the pilgrimage to Mugenjishi, an isolated polar monastery
- × this is where the PCs new temporary home base will be, but the leadership of the cell is hiding out in Mugenjishi because it's so isolated



THE BASE IN PILGRIM'S GATE

- × front business, supplier of food and medicine to smaller religious communities on the Himasa Glacier (aka Lord Patel Glacier)
- × an office and a handful of warehouses in the port at Pilgrim's Gate



- × pay fees to Eridanus and Triangulum to maintain the business, supported by SERAPH
- × not a forward base, not a military base, it's a place for synths (and others who need it) to hide out, and as a secondary communication platform for HQ up at Mugenjishi
- × only a dozen or so "needy" at the base at any given time, meant to be temporary, not permanent

» WHAT NOW?

- × SERAPH gives them a safe place to hide and to pursue their own goals
- × Mugenjishi has a higher-order base that's working on The Verona Enigma, that's their priority
- × The cell at Pilgrim's Gate expects nothing from the PCs unless they endanger the cell or abuse their goodwill, though they're happy to get help if the PCs offer:
 - × they have people who need help, etc.
- × Who knows where Landra is?
 - × she was put into safekeeping by the UPC / Repentant who helped secret her away, but they lost her
 - × The Wizard knows where she is, but his help is gonna cost them

» IF THEY GO TO THE WIZARD FOR HELP, HE ASKS THEM TO...

- × learn something about Mugenjishi - who is the Hardholder - and relay that to him (essentially betray SERAPH)

» IF THEY GO TO SERAPH FOR HELP...

- × SERAPH learns that she was last seen on Shan in the company of some pirates...
- × they'll need a ship and to prepare for the less-than-hospitable locale that is Shan

>> WHAT ABOUT YANCY?

- × Yancy, after losing the PCs on Yakiyah, gets all pissy about it and leverages his connections to go looking for them again. They have a brief respite from his attention, but unless they're VERY careful eventually someone will narc on the PCs from Pilgrim's Gate.
- × Yancy puts a price on their heads, spending his (mom and dad's) credits to put a general bounty out for the six missing synths.

>> STAKES QUESTIONS

- × where does the Protect Ya Neck take them?
 - × Why does it take them there?
 - × Who is waiting there?
 - × Are these people friends or enemies, or undecided?
 - × Who else knows about this place?
- × who knows about Autumn?
- × who can be useful to the party?
- × who is a liability?
- × who is a straight-up traitor?
- × what does everyone think of the PCs?

WHO: see the relationship map

WHAT: the trip from Yakiyah to Cabina and introduction to that world and what's happening there

WHEN: Second Month of the First Year of the Reign of Emperox Pyxis Solanum Rona (3201 Sector Standard)

WHY: get to somewhere safe long enough to investigate the location of Sister Vaska

HOW: with a little help from our friends

NPCS: Landra Vaska (Formally Quantess Eridanus Vaska Landra) a Synthetic Humanoid

MOTIVATIONS

>>

AUTUMN

DESIRE: Safety

FEAR: Isolation

STRENGTH: Idealistic

FLAW: Recklessness

Tempt Autumn with offers of safety at a cost to others she cares about. Threaten to isolate her (noble, human, MES) from others / important moments. Give her a cause to believe in despite it being dangerous or foolish. Offer moments of danger for her to jump into recklessly.

>>

JOHNNY

DESIRE: Empathy

FEAR: Abandonment

STRENGTH: Insight

FLAW: Unreliable

Give Johnny people who understand / care about him at a cost (they're unsafe, unpredictable, bad news folks). Threaten abandonment ("you're a liability, you're not really a synth, etc.) but offer opportunities for human connection and insight. Have pivotal moments rely on Johnny so that Elspeth can choose to fail for XP.

>>

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HALEY

DESIRE: Ambition

FEAR: Obscurity

STRENGTH: Adaptable

FLAW: Hubris

Give Haley a chance to be famous, then threaten that fame. Balance fame against safety - offering up opportunities to build a personal legend but also the wrong people find out. Go full in on her being a kind of leader or symbolic figure for the group. Tempt her with Infamy - if she can't be famous, maybe she can be feared? Give her a chance to do the unexpected, putting her in hard situations with no clear single way out. Offer up a chance to think highly of herself.

ALSO - introduce a second Haley model for COMPETITION, a kind of nicer easier-to-love, seemingly naive version everyone already thinks is great.

>>

JASNAH

DESIRE: Justice

FEAR: Failure

STRENGTH: Adaptable

FLAW: Deception

Show Jasnah examples of clear injustice, as well as questionable justice for her to weigh in on. Make every failure hurt as much as possible, personally, for Jasnah - hold her accountable for everyone else's failures. Give her a chance to show her quality in unexpected situations. Give her the truth but force her to lie about it, show her unpleasant truths. Force Jasnah to confront her past, see if she's honest with others about it - someone knows.

FAR

VERONA

FACTION TURN

RULES EXPANSION

Goal: Expand the Faction Turn, giving player Factions more options and alternate “win” conditions, and mechanize access to previously unavailable lore changes.

Inspiration: Civilization series of games, Court of Swords XP model, the Savvy-head workshop move from AW

Inspiration:

- × altering fictional objects
- × add new fictional objects
- × achieve cultural influence
- × altering existing Assets

Obstacles / Challenges:

- × time scaling doesn’t make a lot of sense for long-term goals
- × the system wasn’t designed to cover any of the new rewards
- × we’re playing a beta of a playtest of a hack of a system not designed to do most of what we’re looking for
- × the game is currently a one-stop solution and we are attempting to bolt specificity to its frame

Considerations:

- × XP is a bit weird, the ways you get it and what you use it for
- × there’s just too much money in the game as-is
- × Force assets are underpowered



// GOALS (*RIGHT NOW*)

When a Faction wants to change a fictional element or undertake a project (such as whatever's been happening with Triangulum) they spend X FacCreds (between 1-5) and roll a d10+X at the end of their turn against a hidden TN, success means making the change or uncovering a secret, etc.

Alternately, a Faction might roll + a stat against no target number, the higher the result, the more lore / info they get.

May be a single roll or contribute to a countdown clock.

A Faction can participate in one Goal roll per turn, with multiple Factions contributing to the same goal if desired (Alliance goals).

Requirements might include a specific Asset in a specific location, Planetary Government, permission from another Faction, a spend of certain amount of FacCreds, required TL, or any combination thereof.

Results have included lore secrets, changes to Faction or Planet tags.



CURRENT OBJECTS

- × Faction Tags

- × Stats

- × Asset Caps

- × Income

- × Upkeep

- × HP / Max HP

- × XP

- × Assets

- × Type

- × HP

- × Attack Damage

- × Counter Damage

- × Upkeep

- × Requirements

- × Special Abilities

- × System

- × In-System Object (Asteroid Belts, Stations, Black Holes, etc.)

- × Planets

- × Location

- × Atmosphere

- × Temperature

- × Biosphere

- × Population

- × Tech Level

- × Planet Tags

- × Orbital Objects

We know that the Planetary Government tag provides some benefits and lore explanation. Whoever has that tag is the functioning government of the Planet. What we don't know is how much influence other Factions have on the culture of that planet.

Considerations:

- × clarify lore responsibility and authority
- × help flavour the individual planets
- × create another vector for competition
- × give Factions with lore or ideological priorities a mechanical way to asset those priorities
- × influential superiority (maybe you can retire after you get X influence)
- × set requirements for Goals

Iteration 1.0 (Limited Influence Model)

- × each planet has a finite clock based on how many people live there (more pop = bigger clock) with factions influencing that planet filling in segments of the clock with their own colour.
 - × Each Asset is worth X
 - × Each Bol is worth Y
 - × Tags are worth Z (Planetary Government, Homeworld, etc.)
- × There's a scarcity of Influence, and once it's full you have to take it from someone who already has it.

Iteration 1.1 (Unlimited Influence Model)

- × same as LIM but there's no cap on how much Influence a Faction can have, it's not a race, it's about percentage at any given time
 - × Each Asset is worth X
 - × Each Bol is worth Y
 - × Tags are worth Z (Planetary Government, Homeworld, etc.)
- × When we need to understand Influence (for lore purposes primarily) we can look and see who has what amount of influence, with no limit to who participates

Iteration 1.2 (Unlimited Multiplier Influence Model)

- × same as LIM but there's no cap on how much Influence a Faction can have, it's not a race, it's about percentage at any given time
- × Planetary Population acts as a multiplier to total influence
 - × Each Asset is worth X
 - × Each Bol is worth Y
 - × Tags are worth Z (Planetary Government, Homeworld, etc.)

How Much Influence is Available, How Much are Things Worth?

- × each planet has Tiers available based on population, which act as multipliers to Influence:
 - × Failed Colony: 0
 - × Outpost: x1
 - × Fewer Than a Million: x2
 - × Several Million: x3
 - × Hundreds of Millions: x4
 - × Billions: x5
 - × Alien Civilization: x1
- × Tech Level As Modifier
 - × TL 5 x2
 - × TL 4+ x1.5
 - × TL 4 x1
 - × TL 3 x0.75
 - × TL 2 x0.5
 - × TL 1 x0.25
- × each Faction Has Assets and Tags to Add Up Influence:
 - × Base of Influence = 1 per hp
 - × Homeworld Tag = 10
 - × Each Asset = 1
 - × Planetary Government= +2
 - × Miscellaneous Bonuses or Penalties
 - × Faction Tags

TEST PLANET: NAVETTE (X2 PLANET)

Trilliant:	5hp Bol (10 Influence) + 3 Assets (6 Influence) + PG (4) = 20 Influence
High Church:	5hp Bol (10 Influence) = 10 Influence
Vagrant:	2 Assets (4 Influence) = 4 Influence
Serpens:	1hp Bol (2 Influence) + 1 Assets (2 Influence) = 4 Influence
The Deathless:	1 hp Bol (2 Influence) = 2 Influence
Total Influence: 40 Influence	
50% Trilliant, 25% HC, 10% Each Vagrant and Serpens, 5% Deathless	

TEST PLANET: DIO (X2 PLANET)

Aquila:	Homeworld (20 Inf) + PG (4 Inf) + 14 hp Bol (28 Inf) + 2 Assets (4 Inf) = 56 Influence
Crux:	1 Asset (2 Inf) = 2 Influence
Fornax:	5 Assets (10 Inf) + 1hp Bol (2 Inf) = 12 Influence
Deathless:	1hp Bol (2 Inf) = 2 Influence
The Deathless:	1 hp Bol (2 Influence) = 2 Influence
High Church:	1 Asset (2 Inf) = 2 Influence
Trilliant Ring:	1 Asset (2 Inf) = 2 Influence
Total Influence: 76	
~Aquila 74%, Fornax 16%, Crux, Deathless, High Church, Trilliant 3%	

TEST PLANET: CABINA (X3)

Triangulum:	1 Asset (3 Inf) = 3 Inf
SERAPH:	Homeworld (30 Inf) + PG (6 Inf) + 29 Hp Bol (87 Inf) + 5 Assets (15 Inf) = 138 Influence
Eridanus:	1 Asset (3 Inf) = 3 Inf
Democratic Mandate:	Mandate: 1 Asset (3 Inf) = 3 Inf
High Church:	1 Asset (3 Inf) = 3 Inf
Total Influence: 150	
~SERAPH 92%, Everyone Else 2%	

TEST PLANET: DEMNORH (X5)

Eridanus:	Homeworld (50 Inf) + Planetary Government (10 Inf) + 49 Hp Bol (245 Inf) + 5 Assets (25 Inf) = 330 Influence
Lyra:	1 Asset (5 Inf) = 5 Influence
Serpens:	1 Assets (10 Inf) + 1hp Bol (2 Inf) = 12 Influence
Deathless:	1 Hp Bol (5 Influence) + 2 Assets (10 Inf) = 15 Influence
High Church:	1 Asset (5 Inf) = 5 Influence
PRISM:	1 Hp Bol (5 Influence) + 3 Assets (15 Inf) = 20 Influence
Total Influence: 380	
~ 87% Eridanus, 5% PRISM, 4% Deathless, 1% Serpens, Lyra and High Church	

TEST PLANET: IMPERIAL PRIME (X10)

Crux:	1Hp Bol (10 Inf) + 2 Assets (20 Inf) = 30 Inf
Fornax:	1 Asset (10 Inf) = 10 Inf
High Church:	6 Assets (60 Inf) + 1 Stealth Asset (5 Inf) + 1 Bol (190 Inf) + PG (20 Inf) = 275 Inf
High Church:	1 Asset (10 Inf) = 10 Inf
Total Influence: 325	
Pyxis 85%, Crux 9%, Fornax and High Church 3%	

INFLUENCE SCORE = TOTAL PLANETARY INFLUENCE ADDED UP



PROBLEMS TO SOLVE / QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- × does a Faction's influence cap out?
- × total HP???
- × does Homeworld give some kind of minimum base? permanently fill some slots despite other rules, gives a baseline influence?



IN THE DISTANT FUTURE

- × a planet / system / sector "happiness" rating
- × localized non-Faction resistance, rebellions, etc.
- × Planet Tags affecting more than Fiction

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